Congressman Phil Gingrey (R-GA)
Statement on
Markup of H.R. 2850, the *Green Chemistry Research and Development Act*
July 11, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Hall, for yielding me time to describe my bill.

First, I want to take this opportunity to thank Chairman Gordon and his staff for working with me on this bill. This legislation has passed the House of Representatives in both the 108th and 109th Congresses, and I am pleased we could work together to bring it through this Committee again. I hope the third time will truly be the charm and that we see H.R. 2850 quickly passed by both chambers and signed by the President.

H.R. 2850, the Green Chemistry Research and Development Act, establishes a program that promotes and coordinates federal green chemistry research and development activities within several federal agencies. Specifically, the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the Department of Energy.

Chemists can design chemicals to be safe, just like they can design them to have other properties, like color and texture. This technique of considering not only the process in which products are manufactured but also the environment in which they are created is the basic definition of green chemistry. It is the method of designing chemical products and processes that at the very least reduce, and at the very best eliminate, the use or generation of hazardous substances.

The basic idea is this: preventing pollution and hazardous waste from the start of a design process is far preferable to cleaning up that pollution and waste at a later date. Additionally, the innovation created by this enhanced research will subsequently spur economic growth, as developing new products and processes is an integral component of many industries, from fabrics to fuel cells.

Green chemistry doesn't just help protect our environment, it helps protect our workers, too. The conditions under which chemicals are created and used can present many risks to those who work on their production. But if companies utilize green chemistry, the materials they use will be as benign as possible, vastly improving employee conditions.

Unfortunately, despite all of the promise of green chemistry, the Federal government invests very little in this area. H.R 2850 works to remedy this by promoting greater federal investment in and coordination of this important research area.

Make no mistake: greater federal attention will encourage universities and academic institutions around the country to train future workers in this exciting technology. H.R. 2850 will achieve this by supporting research and development grants to partnerships between universities, industry and non-profit organizations. It will also promote education through curricula development and fellowships that will collect and disseminate information about green chemistry.

In past years, many industries – from chemical companies and pharmaceutical corporations to carpet manufacturers and biotechnology businesses – have endorsed H.R. 2850, showing a broad range of support for the merits of this legislation. This bill is nearly identical to the version passed in the 109th Congress.

The companies and corporations that have voiced their strong support for this bill realize that the advancement of green chemistry is positive for not only their businesses, but also our country's environment, our economy and our nation's citizens.